

If I were to attempt to put into one sentence all I expected to find at Yverdon, I should say it was a vigorous inner life amongst the boys and youths, quickening, manifesting itself in all kinds of creative activity, satisfying the manysidedness of man, meeting all his necessities, and occupying all his powers both mental and bodily. Pestalozzi, so I imagined, must be the heart, the life-source, the spiritual guide of this life and work; from his central point he must watch over the boy's life in all its bearings, see it in all its stages of development, or at all events sympathise with it and feel with it, whether as the life of the individual, of the family, of the community, of the nation, of mankind at large.

With such expectations I arrived at Yverdon. There was no educational problem whose resolution I did not firmly expect to find there. That my soul soon faithfully mirrored the life which there flowed around me, my report for 1809 sufficiently shows.*

To throw myself completely into the midst, into the very heart, of Pestalozzi's work, I wished to live in the main buildings of the institution, that is to say, in the castle itself.† We would have cheerfully shared the lot of the ordinary scholars, but our wish could not be granted, some outside jealousies standing in the way. However, I soon found a lodging in immediate proximity to the institution, so that we were able to join the pupils at their dinner, their evening meal, and their supper, and to take part in the whole courses of their instruction, so far as the subjects chosen by us were concerned; indeed, to share in their whole life. I soon saw much that was imperfect; but, notwithstanding, the activity which pressed forth on all sides, the vigorous effort, the spiritual endeavour of the life around me, which carried me away with it as it did all other men who came within its influence, convinced me that here I should presently be able to resolve all my difficulties. As far as regarded

* A report that Froebel drew up for the Princess Regent of Rudolstadt in 1809, giving a voluminous account of the theory and practice pursued at Yverdon (Wichard's "Froebel," vol. i., p. 154).

† The castle of Yverdon, an old feudal stronghold, which Pestalozzi had received from the municipality of that town in 1804, to enable him to establish a school and work out his educational system there.

myself personally, I had nothing more earnest to do for the time than to watch that my pupils gained the fullest possible profit from this life which was so rich in vigour for both body and soul. Accordingly we shared all lessons together; and I made it my special business to reason out with Pestalozzi each branch of instruction from its first point of connection with the rest, and thus to study it from its very root.

The forcible, comprehensive, stimulating life stimulated me too, and seized upon me with all its comprehensiveness and all its force. It is true it could not blind me to many imperfections and deficiencies, but these were retrieved by the general tendency and endeavour of the whole system; for this, though containing several absolute contradictions, manifest even at that time, yet vindicated on a general view its inner connection and hidden unity. The powerful, indefinable, stirring, and uplifting effect produced by Pestalozzi when he spoke, set one's soul on fire for a higher, nobler life, although he had not made clear or sure the exact way towards it, nor indicated the means whereby to attain it. Thus did the power and manysidedness of the educational effort make up for deficiency in unity and comprehensiveness; and the love, the warmth, the stir of the whole, the human kindness and benevolence of it replaced the want of clearness, depth, thoroughness, extent, perseverance, and steadiness. In this way each separate branch of education was in such a condition as to powerfully interest, but never wholly to content the observer, since it prepared only further division and separation and did not tend towards unity.

The want of unity of effort, both as to means and aims, I soon felt; I recognised it in the inadequacy, the incompleteness, and the unlikeness of the ways in which the various subjects were taught. Therefore I endeavoured to gain the greatest possible insight into all, and became a scholar in all subjects—arithmetic, form, singing, reading, drawing, language, physical geography, the natural sciences, etc.

I could see something higher, and I believed in a higher efficiency, a closer unity of the whole educational system; in truth, I believed I saw this clearer, though not with greater conviction, than Pestalozzi himself. I held that land happy, that

man fortunate, by whom the means of true education should be developed and applied, and the wish to see this benefit conferred upon my country naturally sprang from the love I bore my native land.* The result was the written record of 1809 already referred to.

Where there is the germ of disunion, where the whole is split up, even sometimes into contradictory parts, and where an absolute reconciling unity is wanting, where what connection there may be is derived rather from casual outward ties than from inner necessary union, the whole system must of necessity dig its own grave, and become its own murderer. Now it was exactly at such a time of supreme crisis that I had the good or the evil fortune to be at Yverdon. All that was good and all that was bad, all that was profitable and all that was unprofitable, all that was strong and all that was weak, all that was empty and all that was full, all that was selfish and all that was unselfish amongst Pestalozzi and his friends, was displayed openly before me.

I happened to be there precisely at the time of the great Commission of 1810. Neither Pestalozzi nor his so-called friends, neither any individuals nor the whole community, could give me, or would give me, what I wanted. In the methods laid down by them for teaching boys, for the thorough education of boys as part of one great human family,—that is, for their higher instruction,—I failed to find that comprehensiveness which is alone sufficient to satisfy the human being. Thus it was with natural history, natural science, German, and language generally, with history, and above all, with religious instruction. Pestalozzi's devotional addresses were very vague, and, as experience showed, were only serviceable to those already in the right way.† I spoke of all these

* Froebel desired to see in Rudolstadt, or elsewhere in Thuringia (his "native land"), an institution like that of Pestalozzi at Yverdon; and he sought to interest the Princess Regent of Rudolstadt by the full account of Yverdon already mentioned.

† This would scarcely seem probable to those who admire and love Pestalozzi. But we must remember that religious teaching appeals so intimately to individual sympathies that it is quite possible that what was of vital service to many others was not of so much use to Froebel, who was, as he frankly admits, out of harmony on many points with his noble-hearted teacher.

things very earnestly and decidedly with Pestalozzi, and at last I made up my mind, in 1810, to quit Yverdon along with my pupils.

But before I continue further here, it is my duty to consider my life and work from yet another point of view.

Amongst the various branches of education, the teaching of languages struck me with especial force as defective, on account of its great imperfection, its capriciousness and lifelessness. The search for a satisfactory method for our native language occupied me in preference to anything else. I proceeded on the following basis:—

Language is an image, a representation of our separate (subject) world, and becomes manifest to the (object) world outside ourselves principally through combined and ordered sounds. If, therefore, I would image forth anything correctly, I must know the real nature of the original object. The theme of our imagery and representation, the outside world, contains objects, therefore I must have a definite form, a definite succession of sounds, a definite word to express each object. The objects have qualities, therefore our language must contain adjectives expressing these qualities. The qualities of objects are fundamental or relative; express what they are, what they possess, and what they become.

Passing now to singing and music, it happened very luckily for me that just at this time Nägeli and Pfeifer brought out their "Treatise on the Construction of a Musical Course according to the Principles of Pestalozzi." Nägeli's knowledge of music generally, and especially of church music, made a powerful impression upon me, and brought music and singing before me as a means for human culture; setting the cultivation of music, and especially of singing, in a higher light than I had ever conceived possible. Nägeli was very capable in teaching music and singing, and in representing their function as inspiring aids to pure human life; and although nearly twenty years have elapsed since I heard those lessons of his, the fire of the love for music which they kindled burns yet, active for good, within my breast. And further, I was taught and convinced by these two super-excellent music teachers, who instructed my pupils, that purely instrumental music, such as

that of the violin or of the pianoforte, is also in its essence based upon and derived from vocal music, though developed through the independent discovery of a few simple sound-producing instruments. Not only have I never since left the path thus opened to me at its origin, but I have consistently traced it onwards in all care and love, and continue to rejoice in the excellent results obtained. This course of music-teaching, as extended and applied later on, has always enjoyed the approbation of the thoughtful and experienced amongst music teachers.

I also studied the boys' play, the whole series of games in the open air, and learned to recognise their mighty power to awake and to strengthen the intelligence and the soul as well as the body. In these games and what was connected with them I detected the mainspring of the moral strength which animated the pupils and the young people in the institution. The games, as I am now fervently assured, formed a mental bath of extraordinary strengthening-power;* and although the sense of the higher symbolic meaning of games had not yet dawned upon me, I was nevertheless able to perceive in each boy genuinely at play a moral strength governing both mind and body which won my highest esteem.

Closely akin to the games in their morally strengthening aspect were the walks, especially those of the general walking parties, more particularly when conducted by Pestalozzi himself. These walks were by no means always meant to be opportunities for drawing close to Nature, but Nature herself, though unsought, always drew the walkers close to her. Every contact with her elevates, strengthens, purifies. It is from this cause that Nature, like noble great-souled men, wins us to her; and whenever school or teaching duties gave me respite, my life at this time was always passed amidst natural scenes and in communion with Nature. From the tops of the high mountains near by I used to rejoice in the clear and still sunset, in the pine-forests, the glaciers, the mountain meadows, all bathed in rosy light. Such an evening walk

* That the boys' characters were immersed in an element of strengthening and developing games as the body is immersed in the water of a strengthening bath, seems to be Froebel's idea.

came indeed to be an almost irresistible necessity to me after each actively-spent day. As I wandered on the sunlit, far-stretching hills, or along the still shore of the lake, clear as crystal, smooth as a mirror, or in the shady groves, under the tall forest trees, my spirit grew full with ideas of the truly god-like nature and priceless value of a man's soul, and I gladdened myself with the consideration of mankind as the beloved children of God. There is no question but that Pestalozzi's general addresses, especially those delivered in the evening, when he used to delight in evoking a picture of noble manliness and true love of mankind and developing it in all its details, very powerfully contributed towards arousing such an inner life as that just described.

Yet I did not lose myself in empty fancies; on the contrary, I kept my practical work constantly before my eyes. From thinking about my dead parents my thoughts would wander back over the rest of my family, turning most often to that dear eldest brother of mine, who has now not been referred to for some time in these pages. He had become the faithful watchful father of several children. I shared in his unaffected fatherly cares, and my soul was penetrated with the desire that he might be able to give his sons such an education as I should feel obliged to point out to him as being the best. Already, ever since I was at Frankfurt, I had communicated to him my thoughts on education and methods of teaching. What now occurred to me out of my new knowledge as applicable to his case, I extracted, collected together, and classified, so as to be able to impart it to him for his use at the first opportunity.

One thing which greatly contributed to the better consideration and elucidation of the Pestalozzian mode of teaching was the presence of a large number of young men sent from various governments as students to Yverdon. With some of these I was on terms of intimacy, and to the exchange of ideas which went on amongst us I owe at least as much as to my own observation.

On the whole I passed a glorious time at Yverdon, elevated in tone, and critically decisive for my after life. At its close, however, I felt more clearly than ever the deficiency of inner unity and interdependence, as well as of outward comprehensiveness and thoroughness in the teaching there.

To obtain the means of a satisfactory judgment upon the best method of teaching the classical tongues, I took Greek and Latin under a young German, who was staying there at that time; but I was constructing a method of my own all the while, by observing all the points which seemed valuable, as they occurred in actual teaching. But the want of a satisfactory presentation of the classical tongues as part of the general means of education and culture of mankind, especially when added to the want of a consideration of natural history as a comprehensive and necessary means of education, and above all the uncertain wavering of the ground-principles on which the whole education and teaching rested at Yverdon, decided me not only to take my pupils back to their parents' house, but to abandon altogether my present educational work, in order to equip myself, by renewed study at some German university, with that due knowledge of natural science which now seemed to me quite indispensable for an educator.

In the year 1810 I returned from Yverdon by Bern, Schaffhausen, and Stuttgart to Frankfurt.

I should have prepared to go to the university at once, but found myself obliged to remain at my post till the July of the following year. The piece-meal condition of the methods of teaching and of education which surrounded me hung heavy on my mind, so that I was extremely glad when at last I was able to shake myself free from my position.

In the beginning of July 1811 I went to Göttingen. I went up at once, although it was in the middle of the session, because I felt that I should require several months to see my way towards harmonising my inward with my outward life, and reconciling my thoughts with my actions. And it was in truth several months before I gained peace within myself, and before I arrived at that unity which was so necessary to me, between my inward and my outward life, and at the equally necessary harmony between aim, career, and method.

Mankind as a whole, as one great unity, had now become my quickening thought. I kept this conception continually before my mind. I sought after proofs of it in my little world within, and in the great world without me; I desired by many a struggle to win it, and then to set it worthily forth. And thus I

was led back to the first appearance of man upon our earth, to the land which first saw man, and to the first manifestation of mankind, his speech.

Linguistic studies, the learning of languages, philology, etc., now formed the object of my attack. The study of Oriental tongues seemed to me the central point, the fountain head, whither my search was leading me; and at once I began upon them with Hebrew and Arabic. I had a dim idea of opening up a path through them to other Asiatic tongues, particularly those of India* and Persia. I was powerfully stimulated and attracted by what I had heard about the study of these languages, then in its early youth—namely, the acknowledgment of a relationship between Persian and German. Greek also attracted me in quite a special way on account of its inner fulness, organisation, and regularity. My whole time and energy were devoted to the two languages I have named.† But I did not get far with Hebrew in spite of my genuine zeal and my strict way with myself, because between the manner of looking at a language congenial to my mind and the manner in which the elementary lesson book presented it to me, lay a vast chasm which I could find no means to bridge over. In the form in which language was offered to me, I could find and see no means of making it a living study; and yet, nevertheless, nothing would have drawn me from my linguistic studies had I not been assured by educated men that these studies, especially my work on Indian and Persian tongues, were in reality quite beside the mark at which I aimed. Hebrew also was abandoned; but, on the other hand, Greek irresistibly enthralled me, and nearly all my time and energy were finally given to its study, with the help of the best books.

I was now free, happy, in good mental and bodily health and vigour, and I gained peace within myself and without, through hard work, interrupted only by an indisposition which kept me to my room for a few weeks. After working all day alone, I used to walk out late in the evening, so that at least I might receive a greeting from the friendly beams of the setting sun. To in-

* Sanskrit is here probably meant.

† Hebrew and Arabic.

vigorate my spirit as well as my bodily frame I would walk on till near midnight in the beautiful neighbourhood which surrounds Göttingen. The glittering starry sky harmonised well with my thoughts, and a new object which appeared in the heavens at this time, aroused my wonder in an especial degree. I knew but little of astronomy, and the expected arrival of a large comet* was, therefore, quite unknown to me; so that I found out the comet for myself, and that was a source of special attraction. This object absorbed my contemplation in those silent nights, and the thought of the all-embracing, wide-spreading sphere of law and order above, developed and shaped itself in my mind with especial force during my night-wanderings. I often turned back home that I might note down in their freshness the results of these musings; and then after a short sleep I rose again to pursue my studies.

In this way the last half of the summer session passed quickly away, and Michaelmas arrived.

The development of my inner life had meanwhile insensibly drawn me little by little quite away from the study of languages, and led me towards the deeper-lying unity of natural objects. My earlier plan gradually reasserted itself, to study Nature in her first forms and elements. But the funds which still remained to me were now too small to permit of the longer residence at the university which that plan necessitated. As I had nothing at all now to depend upon save my own unaided powers, I at first thought to gain my object by turning them to some practical account, such as literary work. I had already begun to prepare for this, when an unexpected legacy changed my whole position. Up to now I had had one aunt still living, a sister of my mother's, who had spent all the best years of her life in my native village, enjoying excellent health and free from care. By her sudden

* The comet of 1811, one of the most brilliant of the present century, was an equal surprise to the most skilled astronomers as to Froebel. Observations of its path have led to a belief that it has a period of 300 years; so that it was possibly seen by our ancestors in 1511, and may be seen by our remote descendants in 2111. The appearance of this comet was synchronous with an unusually fine vintage harvest, and "wine of the great Comet year" was long held in great esteem.

death I obtained, in a manner I had little expected, the means of pursuing my much-desired studies. This occurrence made a very deep impression upon me, because this lady was the sister of that uncle of mine whose death had enabled me to travel from Gross Milchow to Frankfurt, and so first set me upon my career as an educator. And now again the death of a loved one made it possible for me to attain higher culture in the service of this career. Both brother and sister had loved with the closest affection my own mother, dead so far too soon, and this love they had extended to her children after her. May these two loving and beloved ones who through their death gave me a higher life and a higher vocation, live for ever through my work and my career.

My position was now a very pleasant one, and I felt soothing and cheering influences such as had not visited me before.

In the autumn holidays, too, a friendly home was ready to receive me. Besides the country-clergyman brother, who so often was a power for good in my life, I had another brother, also older than I, who had been living more than ten years as a well-established tradesman and citizen in Osterode, amongst the Harz Mountains; head of a quiet, self-contained, happy family, and father of some fine children. My previous life and endeavours as an educator had already brought me into connection with this circle; for I had not failed whenever I found anything suitable to my brother's needs to let him know of it, as he was the conscientious teacher and educator of his own children. It was in this peaceful, active family-circle of an intellectual tradesman's home that I passed all the vacation time during which the university regulations released me from vigorous work. It could not prove otherwise than that such a visit should be of the greatest service to me in my general development, and I remember it with thankfulness even yet on that account.

I return now to my university life. Physics, chemistry, mineralogy, and natural history in general, were my principal studies.

The inner law and order embracing all things, and in itself conditioned and necessitated, now presented itself to me in such clearness that I could see nothing either in nature or in life in which it was not made manifest, although varying greatly according

to its several manifestations, in complexity and in gradation. Just at this time those great discoveries of the French and English philosophers became generally known through which the great manifold external world was seen to form a comprehensive outer unity. And the labours of the German and Swedish philosophers to express these essentially conditioned fundamental laws in terms of weight and number, so that they might be studied and understood in their most exact expression, and in their mutual interchange and connection, fitted in exactly with my own longings and endeavours. Natural science and natural researches now seemed to me, while themselves belonging to a distinct plane of vital phenomena, the foundation and cornerstones which served to make clear and definite the laws and the progress of the development, the culture, and the education of mankind.

It was but natural that such studies should totally absorb me, occupy my whole energies, and keep me most busily employed. I studied chemistry and physics with the greatest possible zeal, but the teaching of the latter did not satisfy me so thoroughly as that of the former.

What in the current half-year's term I was regarding rather from a theoretical standpoint, I intended in the next half-year to study practically as a factor of actual life: hence I passed to organic chemistry and geology.* Those laws which I was able to observe in Nature I desired to trace also in the life and proceedings of man, wherefore I added to my previous studies history, politics, and political economy. These practical departments of knowledge brought vividly home to me the great truth that the most valuable wealth a man can possess lies in a cultivated mind, and in its suitable exercise upon matters growing out of its own natural conditions. I saw further that wealth arose quite as much from vigour of production as from saving by economical use; and that those productions were the most valuable of all, which were the outcome and representation of lofty ideas or remarkable thoughts; and finally, that politics itself was in its essence but a means of uplifting man from the necessities of Nature and of life to the freedom of the spirit and the will.

* *Geognosie.*

While I received much benefit from the lectures on natural history at the university, I could not fall in with the views held there as to fixed forms—crystallography, mineralogy, and natural philosophy. From what I had heard of the natural history lectures of Professor Weiss in Berlin, I felt sure that I could acquire a correct view of both these subjects from him. And also since my means would not allow me to stay even so long as one entire session more at Göttingen, whilst on the other hand I might hope at Berlin to earn enough by teaching to maintain a longer university career there, I came to the conclusion to go to Berlin at the beginning of the next winter session to study mineralogy, geology, and crystallography under Weiss, as well as to do some work at physics and physical laws.

After a stay of a few weeks with my brother at Osterode, I went to Berlin in October 1812.

The lectures for which I had so longed really came up to the needs of my mind and soul, and awakened in me, more fervent than ever, the certainty of the demonstrable inner connection of the whole cosmical development of the universe. I saw also the possibility of man's becoming conscious of this absolute unity of the universe, as well as of the diversity of things and appearances which is perpetually unfolding itself within that unity; and then, when I had made clear to myself, and brought fully home to my consciousness, the view that the infinitely varied phenomena in man's life, work, thought, feeling, and position, were all summed up in the unity of his personal existence, I felt myself able to turn my thoughts once more to educational problems.

To make sure of my power to maintain myself at the university, I undertook some teaching at a private school of good reputation.* My work here, beyond the sufficient support it afforded me during residence, had no positive effect upon the endeavour of my life, for I found neither high intelligence, lofty aims, nor unity in the course of instruction.

* The Plamann School, an institution of considerable merit. Plamann was a pupil of Pestalozzi. One of the present writers studied crystallography later on with a professor who had been a colleague of Froebel's in this same school, and who himself was also a pupil of Pestalozzi.

The fateful year 1813 had now begun. All men grasped weapons, and called on one another to fly to arms to defend the Fatherland. I, too, had a home, it is true, a birthplace, I might say a Motherland, but I could not feel that I had a Fatherland.* My home sent up no cry to me; I was no Prussian,† and thus it came about that the universal call to arms (in Berlin) affected me, in my retired life, but little. It was quite another sentiment which drew me to join the ranks of German soldiers; my enthusiasm was possibly small, but my determination was firmly fixed as the rocks themselves.

This sentiment was the consciousness of a pure German brotherhood, which I had always honoured in my soul as a lofty and sublime ideal; one which I earnestly desired might make itself felt in all its fulness and freedom all over Germany.

Besides the fidelity with which I clung to my avocation as an educator also influenced my action in this matter. Even if I could not say truly that I had a Fatherland, I must yet acknowledge that every boy, that every child, who might perhaps later on come to be educated by me would have a Fatherland, that this Fatherland was now requiring defence, and that the child was not in a position to share in that defence. It did not seem possible to imagine that a young man capable of bearing arms could become a teacher of children and boys whose Fatherland he had refused to defend with his blood and even with his life if need were; that he who now did not feel ashamed to shrink from blows could exist without blushing in after years, or could incite his pupils to do something noble, something calling for sacrifice

* Froebel is here symbolically expressing the longing which pervaded all noble spirits at that time for a free and united Germany, for a great Fatherland. The tender mother's love was symbolised by the ties of home (Motherland), but the father's strength and power (Fatherland) was only then to be found in German national life in the one or two large states like Prussia, etc. It needed long years and the termination of this period of preparation by two great wars, those of 1866 and of 1870, to bind the whole people together, and make Germany no longer a "geographical expression" but a mighty nation.

† In the beginning of this great contest it was Prussia who declared war against the common enemy and oppressor, Napoleon. The other German powers, for the most part, held aloof.

and for unselfishness, without exposing himself to their derision and contempt. Such was the second main reason which influenced me.

Thirdly, this summons to war seemed to me an expression of the general need of the men, the land, and the times amidst which I lived, and I felt that it would be altogether unworthy and unmanly to stand by without fighting for this general need, and without taking my share in warding off the general danger.

Before these convictions all considerations gave way, even that of my bodily constitution, which was far too weakly for such a life.

As comrades I selected the Lützowers; and at Eastertide 1813 I arrived at Dresden on my road to join the infantry division of Lützow's corps at Leipzig.* Through the retired nature of my self-concentrated life it came about naturally that I, although a regularly matriculated student, had held aloof from the other students, and had gained no settled acquaintance amongst them; thus, out of all the vigorous comrades whom I met at Dresden, many of whom were like myself, Berlin students, I did not find one man I knew. I made but few new friends in the army, and these few I was fated to encounter on the first day of my entrance into my new work of soldiering. Our sergeant at the first morning halt after our march out from Dresden, introduced me to a comrade from Erfurt as a Thüringer, and therefore a fellow-countryman. This was Langethal; and casually as our acquaint-

* The Baron von Lützow formed his famous volunteer corps in March 1813. His instructions were to harass the enemy by constant skirmishes, and to encourage the smaller German states to rise against the tyrant Napoleon. The corps became celebrated for swift, dashing exploits in small bodies. Froebel seems to have been with the main body, and to have seen little of the more active doings of his regiment. Their favourite title was "Lützow's Wilde Verwegene Schaar" (Lützow's Wild Bold Troop). Amongst the volunteers were many distinguished men; for instance, the poet Körner, whose volume of war poetry, much of it written during the campaign, is still a great favourite. One of the poems, "Lützow's Wilde Jagd" ("Lützow's Wild Chase"), is of world-wide fame through the musical setting of the great composer Weber. In June 1813 came the armistice of which Froebel presently speaks. During the fresh outbreak of war after the armistice the corps was cut to pieces. It was reorganised, and we find it on the Rhine in December of the same year. It was finally dissolved after Napoleon's abdication and exile to Elba, 20th April, and the peace of Paris 30th May, 1814.